

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)

2. (New) An in-line skate comprising:

a flexible upper;

a base attached to the upper, the base having a toe portion, a flexible metatarsal head portion extending rearwardly from the toe portion, and a heel portion extending rearwardly from the metatarsal head portion, the heel portion having a proximal end adjacent the flexible metatarsal head portion, wherein flexure of the metatarsal head portion allows the heel portion to move between a lower position and an upper position with respect to the toe portion;

a plurality of wheels;

a forward frame member having a pair of spaced sidewalls that rotatably supports at least two of the plurality of wheels, and a transverse section connecting the pair of sidewalls, the transverse section being attached to the toe portion of the base, wherein the forward frame member includes a support portion that extends rearwardly from the transverse section and underlies the proximal end of the heel portion of the base; and

a rearward frame segment having a pair of spaced sidewalls that rotatably supports at least one of the plurality of wheels, and a transverse section connecting the pair of sidewalls, the transverse section being attached to the heel portion of the base;

wherein the heel portion of the base engages the support portion of the forward frame member when the base is in the lower position.

3. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 2, wherein the forward frame member is longitudinally aligned with the rearward frame member and overlaps a portion of the rearward frame member such that the forward frame member cannot rotate out of longitudinal alignment with the rearward frame member.

4. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 2, wherein the forward frame member sidewalls comprise rearwardly disposed flanges extending from the transverse section of the forward frame member and slidably receiving a forward portion of the rearward frame member.

5. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 4, wherein the forward frame member rotatably supports three wheels and the rearward frame member rotatably supports one wheel.

6. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 4, wherein the forward frame member rotatably supports three wheels and the rearward frame member rotatably supports two wheels.

7. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 4, further comprising a biasing member that biases the heel region of the base towards the lower position.

8. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 7, wherein the base is constructed of a resilient material and integrally defines the biasing member.

9. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 7, wherein the biasing member comprises a strip of resilient material secured to a lower surface of the base.

10. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 9, wherein the biasing member is removable from the base.

11. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 2, wherein the support portion of the forward frame member includes a transverse stabilizing member that extends between the forward frame member sidewalls.

12. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 3, further comprising a low friction bearing surface defined on the overlapping portion of the rearward frame member.

13. (New) The in-line skate of Claim 2, wherein the proximal end of the heel portion of the base further comprising at least one elastomeric bumper that is positioned to engage the support portion of the forward frame member.

14. (New) A skate comprising:

a shoe portion for receiving a skater's foot;

a plurality of wheels;

a base fixedly attached to the shoe portion, the base including a rigid toe portion and a rigid a heel portion interconnected with a flexible metatarsal head portion such that the heel portion is movable between an upper position and a lower position with respect to the toe portion to permit elevation of the heel portion during skating; and

a frame rotatably supporting the plurality of wheels, the frame having a forward segment secured to an underside of the toe portion of the base and including a pair of sidewalls having a back end that extends rearwardly to underlie the heel portion of the base, and a rearward segment secured to the heel portion of the base, wherein the forward frame segments include first and second stabilizing flanges that slidably overlap the rearward frame segments;

wherein the heel portion of the base contacts the back end of the forward segment sidewalls when the base is in the lower position.

15. (New) The skate of Claim 14, further comprising a low friction-bearing surface on the overlapped portion of the rearward frame segment.

16. (New) The skate of Claim 14, further comprising a transverse reinforcement disposed between the first and second stabilizing flanges.

17. (New) The skate of Claim 14, further comprising a locking element for selectively locking the forward and rearward frame segments to prevent flexure of the base.

18. (New) The skate of Claim 14, further comprising a biasing member coupled to the base to bias the heel portion of the base toward the lower position.

19. (New) The skate of Claim 14, wherein the metatarsal head portion of the base includes a stress concentrating contour that focuses flexure of the base at the metatarsal head portion.

20. (New) The skate of Claim 14, wherein at least one of the forward and rearward segments of the frame are mounted to the base for adjustable positioning in both the longitudinal and lateral directions.

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